

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS**

Re: *2010 Quadrennial Regulatory Review – Review of the Commission’s Broadcast Ownership Rules and Other Rules Adopted Pursuant to Section 202 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996*, MB Docket No. 09-182

I am eager to begin--and complete--this review of the broadcast ownership rules. I want to thank the FCC staff in advance for the hard work that I know they will put into this critical review. It is not an easy undertaking. Nor should it be. I have many times expressed my displeasure with the way this review was handled in its previous two incarnations. Hopefully, the third time is the charm. I am confident that the proceeding we launch today will be different in important ways—asking the questions that really need to be asked, collecting meaningful data and listening, hopefully, to the American people who are ultimately the ones most affected by these rules.

While we go into the proceeding with an open mind and a desire to gain a thorough understanding of the current circumstances existing in today’s media landscape, we would be doing ourselves and the American public a true disservice if we didn’t rely as well on information already in our possession—including the records in the localism proceeding, previous media ownership hearings and proceedings that examine the state of minority ownership.

Based on staff analysis as laid out in the Notice of Inquiry, there has been a 39% decrease in the number of commercial radio station owners between 1996 and 2010. In addition, we have seen a 33% decrease in the number of television station owners over that same time period. It is difficult to fully quantify the harmful effects that media consolidation has had on the news, information and entertainment we receive. Fewer and fewer voices do not an informed electorate and robust democracy make.

Our country urgently needs a media that is reflective of our diverse communities and interests. While minorities currently comprise roughly 34% of the nation’s population, they own only 3.15% of full-power commercial TV stations. And, while women make up 51% of the population, they only own 5.87% of full power commercial TV stations. These numbers are appalling. If a central tenet of our FCC mandate is to promote diversity in the media, which it is, then we need diverse ownership policies to help that happen. Anyone who actually thinks that who owns the media doesn’t significantly affect how our country is being informed is not paying attention. Shortchanging ownership diversity is shortchanging our civic dialogue.

I believe—and I think most Americans believe—that this nation deserves a media that is competitive, diverse and paying attention to the individual localities and communities in which we reside. This is absolutely vital. Certainly in this Quadrennial we need to pay attention to market realities and all the new media innovations that have developed since our last review, but uppermost in our minds must be crafting rules that serve the goals of democracy-building and democracy-maintenance.

I look forward to a full and creative record nourished by the widest possible public participation. I urge any and all interested stakeholders to share their thoughts and experiences with us. And I would note that we seek responses not just to the questions specifically asked in this Notice, but to other questions and concerns that strike particular stakeholders as relevant to this proceeding. Finally, I hope that the Commission will “go on the road” in the months ahead to hear directly from consumers and citizens. I know of no better way for us to educate ourselves about the problems faced by, and the solutions sought by, the American people.